

PASSENGER transactions

● "We Move People"

Summer 2004

A Message from State Transportation Director Gloria J. Jeff

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MDOT Annual Report Highlights 2003 Efforts

The 2003 Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Annual Report, "Moving Michigan Forward Partnerships and Preservation," provides an excellent overview of the transit choices available to Michigan residents and visitors. The publication highlights transportation's role in growing Michigan's economy and improving the quality of life for the public by serving customers effectively, and by strengthening key partnerships.



Gloria J. Jeff

Governmental agencies, by definition, must be responsive to the public. MDOT takes this charge very seriously putting words into action by listening to customers, and continuously striving to improve partnerships with federal, state, and local governments. Nowhere is this outreach effort more apparent than in Michigan's statewide public transit programs and services.

In 2003, the department's Multi-Modal Transportation Services Bureau (MMTSB) and its many partners worked effectively to maintain and improve existing public transportation. The 2003 Annual Report highlights many of these efforts including:

- The first ever 2003 "Transportation Summit" to look at the future and create a shared vision for safe, effective and flexible transportation.

(continued on page 2)

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES BUREAU • PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION DIVISION**

"Providing Michigan citizens with the best passenger transportation services through quality customer assistance"

MDOT Annual Report Highlights 2003 Efforts *(continued from page 1)*

- Embarking on, and accomplishing, significant safety initiatives to improve transportation services.
- Joins efforts to secure congressional support for reauthorization.
- Michigan Transit Training Network to address local transit training needs.
- Capital improvements for bus and ferry services.

These are only a few of the initiatives “Team MDOT” and its partners were able to accomplish in 2003. I urge you to take a few minutes and check out the 2003 MDOT Annual Report. MDOT is proud of its relationships with transportation partners and will continue to look for new and more effective ways to build and strengthen transportation partnerships in Michigan, the nation and across borders.

You can view the 2003 MDOT Annual Report on the Web at the following address: <http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9622---,00.html>.

Web PTMS Releases Oct. 2004

The Web PTMS is still on schedule for release in Oct. 2004. Your 2006 Annual Application will be submitted through this new system.

Web PTMS was demonstrated at the Financial Management for Transit Training in September (in Houghton Lake) and is being tested by several MDOT staff and a few transit agencies right now. Training is scheduled at the Michigan Transit Conference in late October, and will also be available throughout the state during the months of November and December.

The functionality of the system is similar to the current PTMS, but the “look and feel” of the system has changed. With the release of the Web PTMS, we anticipate easier access and use of the system for all users. For more information, contact Kathy Urda at 517/335-2575, e-mail urdak@michigan.gov.

Medium-Duty Bus Contract Awarded and Cutaway Bids Under Review

A new medium-duty bus contract was awarded to Hoekstra Transportation, Inc. on Mar. 1, 2004. The manufacturer is Eldorado National and the buses will be built on the new GM medium-duty chassis. The first bus was built and approved by MDOT and regular production of the buses has begun. The two-year contract expires on Mar. 2, 2006. You can access the contract including specifications at the following Web site: www.state.mi.us/dmb/apps/oop/purchasing_user.asp?frm=contracts&cmd=view&number=071B4200165.

MDOT is currently reviewing several bids submitted for the invitation to bid for small buses. The current small bus contracts with Hoekstra Transportation, Inc. (Eldorado National buses) and Coach & Equipment Manufacturing were extended to Sept. 1, 2004. A new contract is expected to be awarded shortly after that date.

TEA-21 Extended Until Sept. 30

The current version of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) expired on Sept. 30, 2003. Since then, federal funds have continued to be allocated at 2003 levels under a series of short-term extensions. On July 22, Congress passed yet another short-term extension of federal transportation funding at last year’s levels through the end of September.

How is this costing Michigan money? Currently, there are three plans being considered in Washington – the Administration’s bill, the Senate bill, and the House bill. Michigan prefers the Senate version’s funding level (S. 1072); under this version, Michigan would receive an additional \$343 million per year.

Each day that funds are distributed under the old formula rather than under S. 1072, Michigan loses approximately \$940,000. The total funding loss to Michigan between Sept. 30, 2003 and the time the current extension runs out on Sept. 30, 2004 is estimated at \$343 million which includes \$36 million in transit funding.

You can see the on-going cost of this delay on the MDOT Web site at www.michigan.gov/mdot/.

Make Riding Transit A Part of Your Fitness Routine

by Janet Geissler

Eight-year-old Michaela Daler (right) doesn't think of it as exercise it's just plain old fun. But she gets several hours of daily physical activity - and the Eaton County Transportation Authority (EATRAN) helps make that possible.

Michaela, who lives in Charlotte, takes advantage of EATRAN's Summer Fun Pass, which gives youth unlimited rides for one price during the summer. EATRAN teamed up with several local businesses – many of which offer fitness opportunities – to provide incentives for using the pass. For example, the Westside YMCA and The Summit offer free skate rental for students who arrive using the Summer Fun Pass, and discounts are available at golf courses, a bowling alley, riding stable, sports center and other sites.



Michaela takes the bus each morning to Bennett Park, where she studies nature, plays on the playground and participates in physical activities, such as kickball. In the afternoon she heads to Galewood Elementary School for a summer recreation program where she chases frogs, plays games like freeze tag and hockey, competes in jump-rope contests and plays on the playground. During the school year, she takes EATRAN to a karate class.



Riding the bus can be part of an active lifestyle. It can be in the form of taking a trip to a destination to participate in a physical activity, as Michaela does, or just walking a few blocks to and from a bus stop.

Just 30 minutes of walking per day – which can be broken up into 10-minute intervals – will burn 100 calories. Do that 5 times a week, and over the course of a year, you'll have walked off about 7 ½ pounds.

Several public transit systems have added bicycle racks to their buses, which provide another fitness opportunity (see page 4 for a list of Michigan transit systems with bus bike racks). Bay Area Transportation Authority (BATA), which

operates in Leelanau and Grand Traverse counties, has bike racks on 31 of its 60 vehicles. In the picture above, Missy Luyk of Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails, Inc. loads a bicycle onto the rack on the front of a BATA bus.

Bob Otwell, executive director of Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails, sees the bus system as an extension of the recreational trails. He says the bike racks promote more physical activity, as people in outlying communities load their bikes on a BATA bus and then cycle around Traverse City.

"My wife and daughter rode BATA with their two bikes from Traverse City to Suttons Bay and then rode the Leelanau trail back to Traverse City," Otwell said. That was a 15-mile bike ride.

"The bike racks have been very well received by the community," said BATA executive director Joe DeKoning. "We want to get them on all of our general public fleet."

Get on Board for Fitness!

Here are ways to use public transit to help achieve your fitness goals:

- **Walk to and from a bus stop.** For an extra workout, get on or off a stop earlier than usual.
- **If you have curb-to-curb service,** have the bus pick you up or drop you off a few blocks from your home or destination.
- **Take advantage of bike racks** to conveniently transport your bicycle to a great place to ride.
- **Take the bus to destinations where you can participate in healthy activities:** the gym, a golf course, bowling alley, park, hiking trail, swimming pool, sports center.

Around the State



SMART Encourages “Bikes on Board”

It's official, SMART fixed-route buses are now bike accessible! Through the new Bikes on Board program, passengers can easily load their bikes and venture to new destinations while getting healthy and fit!

The Bikes on Board kickoff, held at the State Fair Coliseum, included a bike parade with local officials leading the way, including Wayne County executive Bob Ficano and Macomb County commissioner chair Nancy White. Several area bike clubs participated. There was a lot of excitement about the new way to ride SMART.

The bike racks, which will be installed on the entire line haul fleet, offer passengers a unique way to travel to local bike routes, shopping destinations, school, or work. Each bike rack holds two bikes. They are free, safe, and easy to use, requiring three simple steps for loading.

“The Bikes on Board program is SMART's way of joining local communities in getting fit and healthy,” explained SMART general manager Dan Dirks. “And what better way to travel around southeast Michigan? Particularly with gas prices as they are.”

For further information, check out www.smartbus.org.

Michigan Transit Systems with bus bike racks

- **Ann Arbor Transportation Authority**
- **Bay Area Transit Authority**
- **Blue Water Area Transit**
- **Capital Area Transportation Authority**
- **Interurban Transit Partnership (The Rapid)**
- **Kalamazoo Metro Transit**
- **Muskegon Area Transit Authority**
- **Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)**

For a list of transit systems around the U.S. that are bicycle friendly, check out www.bikemap.com.

MAX Transit Employs Creative Marketing Ideas

As reported in the Spring 2004 issue of the Passenger TransActions, MAX Transit, which serves the City of Holland and Holland Township, sponsored a poster contest in conjunction with National Transportation Week May 16-22. The three winning student posters are now seen all around town. Until mid-September, a temporary decal showing the first, second, and third place winning posters was displayed on both sides of a MAX bus (see picture below).



The decals were used to recognize the winning students and to help raise community awareness about the benefits of public transit.

MAX Transit offers free rides on ozone action days. The Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, which helps promote ozone action awareness in conjunction with the West Michigan Clean Air Coalition, notifies MAX Transit whenever an Ozone Action Day is forecast. On these days, MAX Transit displays placards on the front window dash that read “Ozone Action Day-Free Fixed Route Rides.” MAX Transit officials are eager to do their part to help reduce auto emissions that contribute to ground-level ozone pollution by offering the free rides. They also hope that if area residents become more familiar with using MAX Transit, they will consider riding the bus in lieu of using their personal vehicles.

For more information on these MAX Transit programs, call MAX at 616/355-1010 or visit www.catchamax.org.

AATA Bus Service Has Two Markets

By Chris White, AATA

A primary mission of the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA) has been to provide bus service for people who don't drive. This includes primarily youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income persons.

Transit is the primary means of transportation for many of these people, and transit service needs to be comprehensive to meet their needs to get to and from work, school, medical appointments, shopping, and many other activities. For people who depend on transit, service is needed throughout the area at a broad range of times.

The basic structure of AATA's routes is a radial system with coordinated transfers. That is, most routes converge at the transit center in downtown Ann Arbor with buses from most routes scheduled to meet at the same time. This type of radial route design is used in most U.S. cities under 500,000 population because it distributes trips efficiently. Weekdays, a person can get from one place in Ann Arbor to another with a travel time of no more than 45 minutes. This is generally true even during evenings and weekends when most routes only operate once every 60 minutes.

Increasingly, the AATA's bus service is being asked to help reduce traffic congestion and increased parking demand in Ann Arbor. Traffic congestion is concentrated during weekdays, particularly in peak commute hours. To encourage people to ride the bus, bus service must be frequent and direct (no transfer required). In addition, the use of bus service is largely dependent upon external factors, particularly the supply and price of parking. In Ann Arbor, this means that the opportunity for AATA to attract commuters is concentrated downtown and on the University of Michigan campus where parking is limited and commuters have to pay to park.

Since 1993, the AATA has increased services targeting this "choice" market. Nearly all of the 17 percent increase in riders over the last ten years has come from this market. In AATA's 2002 survey of bus passengers, 34 percent of riders reported that they could have driven, which is up from 18 percent in the 1998 survey. This increase is the result of new services combined with a major effort by AATA to work with large employers such as the University of Michigan, Pfizer, and downtown Ann Arbor through the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and its getDowntown program.

Even with this growth, the share of the commuter market served by AATA is relatively small. About five

percent to eight percent of all trips during peak-hours are taken by bus. However, as noted by the Federal Highway Administration, "The characteristics of highway traffic flow are such that a shift in a relatively small proportion of peak-period trips can lead to substantial reductions in overall congestion."

The AATA is continuing its efforts to attract commuters through promotional efforts, an expanded park and ride program, and cooperative ventures with the University of Michigan and other employers and government agencies. At the same time, we are continuing our commitment to provide comprehensive service for people who depend upon bus service to meet their daily needs.

Antrim County Welcomes New Manager as Bob Straw Retires

In early June, Robert Straw retired as manager of Antrim County Transportation after 18 years of service. Bob began his career in Antrim County with the Commission on Aging and then moved over to public transit.

Bob is an avid hockey player and a long-time member of the Traverse City Men's Hockey League where he usually played 3-4 times a week year round! He and his wife Sue have moved to Florida where Bob plans on golfing, fishing, boating, and, of course, playing hockey in the local men's league. Bob's professionalism and dedication will be missed. Bob, thanks for your service to the citizens of Antrim County and good luck in retirement!

Bob's successor is Sheridan Rhoads who brings a varied transportation background to his new position. Sheridan retired from the Department of State Police's Office of Highway Safety Planning in 1997 after 25 years of service. After retirement, he worked as a traffic safety consultant and also was the Safe Schools Program coordinator for Michigan State University's School of Criminal Justice from 1999-2002. Sheridan and his wife moved to the Elk Rapids area last year, and he decided he wanted a new challenge. We wish Sheridan success in his new position and welcome him to the public transit community in Michigan!

JTA Dedicates New Maintenance Center

In June, Jackson Transportation Authority (JTA) dedicated its new maintenance center to Stanley Deneka, JTA's former maintenance director. The Stanley Deneka Maintenance Center (SDMC) honors the late Mr. Deneka's years of service and his determination to bring the idea of a maintenance center to fruition.



The efforts of general manager Cameron McCollum, administrative director Oliver Lindsay, and former administrative director Garret Erb

secured a federal grant of \$491,839 and a state grant of \$122,960. Senator Nick Smith was instrumental in helping JTA attain the federal funding needed to begin construction of the new facility.

The planning of the center took nearly three years. The SDMC was created to do more than just service JTA vehicles (storage, fueling and bus washing). The SDMC enables JTA to do community partnering with other non-profit agencies. JTA currently maintains and fuels vehicles for several non-profit entities. With the new facility, JTA will be able to expand services to additional non-profit agencies. Community partnering not only benefits JTA by bringing in additional revenue, but saves money for the participating non-profit agencies as well.



**"Providing the highest quality transportation services
for economic benefit and improved quality of life."**

ITP/The Rapid Opens New Transit Terminal

The Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP/The Rapid) opened its new \$22.7 million transit terminal in Grand Rapids in June. Dignitaries present included U.S. Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, U.S. Rep. Vern Ehlers, State Rep. Jerry Kooiman, and ITP/The Rapid's Peter Varga. MDOT representatives included Larry Tibbitts, Rob Abent, Sharon Edgar, Jean Ruestman, and Dean Peterson.

Named "Rapid Central Station," the intermodal facility at 250 Grandville Avenue SW serves as a transfer center for all of ITP/The Rapid's line-haul bus routes and will be shared with Greyhound, the area's intercity bus carrier. Rapid Central Station features community rooms, ticket sales offices, restrooms, a police substation, security center, concessions and seating areas.

Features such as a "green roof" of living plant material and construction materials of recycled products make the facility the first environmentally certified transit center in the state. The 560-ft. long by 100-ft. wide flowing roof structure behind the Rapid Central Station covers 17 bus slips. Ranging in height from 14 feet to 41 feet, the flowing roof structure is inspired by the rapids in the Grand River, from which ITP derived its name. More than 425 tons of steel provide the support system for the roof structure's more than one and a half acres of Teflon-coated fiberglass.

The Passenger TransActions is a quarterly news bulletin produced by the Michigan Department of Transportation, Passenger Transportation Division for the public transit providers in Michigan. Suggestions or comments may be sent to Jill Adams, MDOT/Passenger Transportation Division, P.O. Box 30050, Lansing, Michigan 48909, or call 517/373-2051 (e-mail adamsji@michigan.gov). The Passenger TransActions is available online at www.michigan.gov/mdotptd - latest issue under Publications. Alternative formats such as large print, braille, or audio-tape are available upon request by calling Stu Lindsay 517/335-2598 (e-mail lindsays@michigan.gov).

Bay Metro Celebrates 30 years

Bay Metropolitan Transit Authority celebrated its 30th anniversary in July with a cadre of speakers lauding public transportation. Speakers included Mike Stoner, general manager of Bay Metro; Bob Redmond, Bay Metro board chair; State Sen. James Barcia; county executive Tom Hickner; Bay City mayor Bob Katt; PTD administrator Sharon Edgar; district judge Craig Alston; and rider representative Jeff Coupie, Arenac Opportunities, Inc.

Bay Metro provides 260,000 rides annually to the disabled and approximately 80,000 to seniors. General Manager Stoner says the demand for public transportation will be even greater in the future due to changing demographics -- more senior citizens and disabled persons -- and riders will demand improvements to existing services and additional new services.

Bay Metro serves Bay City, Bay County and Arenac County with a total annual ridership of approximately 650,000. For more information on the Bay Metro celebration, go to www.mybaycity.com (under Past Issues on left of screen, click on Archive, then on 18 Jul 2004).

Caro Thumbody Express Celebrates 20 Years

In July, Caro Thumbody Express celebrated 20 years of service to downtown Caro located in Michigan's Thumb area. Caro Thumbody Express, which operates in Almer and Indianfields Townships, is a service of the Caro Transit Authority and the Human Development Commission. On hand to help with the celebration was State Sen. James Barcia, State Rep. Tom Meyer, and MDOT representatives Sharon Edgar and Fred Featherly.

Over the past 20 years, Caro Thumbody Express has seen its ridership increase from 6,800 rides in 1984 to approximately 65,000 rides in 2003. The bus service is available to anyone who needs a ride and all buses are lift equipped to handle special needs situations.

Congratulations on 20 years of service, Caro Thumbody Express!

Midland Dial-A-Ride Goes to the Prom!

Every year volunteers in Midland organize a prom at the Midland Country Club for persons with a disability. The theme for this year's prom held in April was "Magical Memories."

Midland Dial-A-Ride drivers wanted to make this year's dance especially memorable by dressing up for the occasion. After Hours Formal Wear provided tuxedos for each driver, so their passengers could ride to and from the event in style. Drivers Dale Bement, Ken Caldwell, Jerry Hall, and Laurie Klein didn't hesitate for a minute when their supervisor approached them about the idea. They were eager to make the evening special for everyone involved. By the looks on these passengers' faces, it looks like their mission was accomplished!



Laurie Klein and Jamie Pitts



Dale Bement (center) with Margaret Knadler and Rose Richard

Study Recommends System Consolidation in Kalamazoo County

A recent study of public transportation systems in Kalamazoo County recommended the consolidation of Kalamazoo Metro Transit and Kalamazoo County Care-A-Van. The study also recommended increasing the marketing and coordination with the business community, social agencies, and other constituents, and establishing a period of service experimentation to determine what new services should be considered (more transfer points, variation of service levels to outlying communities, and express routes).

A transit subcommittee will meet with representatives of the City of Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo County to begin discussions on the possible consolidation of the two transit systems.

Millage Campaigns Successful for 13 Transit Agencies

Thirteen Michigan transit agencies had successful millage campaigns in August. Congratulations to these agencies!

First Time Millages Approved

Shiawassee Area Transportation
Yates Dial-A-Ride

Millage Renewals and/or Increases Approved

Capital Area Transportation – renewal
Caro Transit Authority – renewal
Charlevoix County Public Transportation – renewal
Clare County Transit – renewal
Flint Mass Transportation – millage increase for five years
Gogebic County Transit – renewal
Isabella County Transportation – .3 mill increase for four years
Ludington Mass Transportation – renewal
Marquette County Transit – .6 mill increase for five years
Midland County – renewal
Niles Dial-A-Ride - renewal
Ontonagon County Public Transit – .5 mill renewal plus .5 mill increase for four years

TV&E Celebrates 27th Year

Even the chilly June weather couldn't stop the intrepid participants of the Transit Vehicle and Equipment (TV&E) Seminar from enjoying the vendor show and workshops at this year's seminar.

During the seminar kick-off, Judy Knight (picture on right) from Livingston Essential Transportation Service (LETS) was presented with a certificate of appreciation for her contributions to the transit community.

Judy has participated on the Passenger Transportation Division's (PTD) Vehicle and Equipment Advisory Team since its beginning and is a member of the PTD Training and Education Advisory Team. Judy, who has been with LETS for 18 years, is the trainer and maintenance coordinator for LETS.



This year, transit agencies were encouraged to enter the "Grand Idea Competition" which highlighted innovations that improved vehicle maintenance processes through creative approaches. Four transit agencies submitted 13 innovative ideas and the grand prize went to Midland Dial-A-Ride for a Plexiglas insert for the lift area and a lift wedge. Thanks to Midland Dial-A-Ride, Marquette County Transit Authority, Gladwin City/County Transit, and Capital Area Transportation Authority for submitting ideas for the competition. If your agency would like a copy of the "Grand Idea Competition" booklet, contact Jill Adams (see contact information below).

Over 115 participants enjoyed the Michigan outdoors during the vendor show. The vendor show attracted 81 representatives from 50 vendors to show their products. On Thursday and Friday, the workshops were moved indoors so our participants could warm up. Special thanks to all the instructors for the workshops this year.

Dates for the 2005 Transit Vehicle and Equipment Seminar are June 15-17. If you have suggestions for workshop topics or would like to be involved in the seminar planning, please contact Jill Adams at 517/373-2051, e-mail adamsji@michigan.gov.

2004 Michigan Small Bus Rodeo A Success!

Yeee-Haaaa! The 2004 Michigan Small Bus Rodeo was held on July 21, 2004 in Midland. Fifty-three drivers from 23 transit agencies lined up to have a chance to tame the wild “Bully.”

First place individual honors went to Roberta Keast of Gladwin City/County Transit, second place went to Tim Olson of U.P. Community Services, and third place went to Paul Silvas of Eaton County Transportation Authority. These three individuals are eligible to compete in the CTAA National Rodeo in St. Louis, Missouri in 2005.

The first place team honors went to Gladwin City/County Transit with team members Les Bennett, Bud Byrd, and Roberta Keast. The second place two-way tie team honors went to Mark Kauffman, Frank Thibert, and Mark Griffith of Roscommon County Mini Bus; and Loretta Smith and Paul Silvas of Eaton County Transportation Authority. The third place three-way tie team honors went to Dean Miller, Troy Lowe, and Lance Houck of Branch Area Transit Authority; Rod Suttan, Terry Binger, and Janet Wilhelm of City of Alma; and Mike Beech, Al Diana, and Steve Soliz of Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA).

The “Rookie Award” winner was Les Bennett of Gladwin City/County Transit. Les had the highest overall score of all 14 registered rookies.

A special thank you to all of the judges from the police and sheriff departments from the Midland area and all of the Multi-Modal Transportation Services Bureau volunteers! Thanks to the Michigan Public Transit Association (MPTA) for co-sponsoring the rodeo and helping us to show our appreciation to all the transit drivers for the work they do everyday. Thank to everyone for making the 2004 rodeo a success and we’ll see you again next year, partners!



1st Place Individual honors went to Roberta Keast from Gladwin City/County Transit. Pictured above are: (left to right) Leon Hank (MDOT), Roberta, and Dennis Vannest, Gladwin City/County Transit manager.



1st Place Team honors went to Gladwin/City County Transit. Pictured above (left to right): Bud Byrd, Roberta Keast, Les Bennett, and Leon Hank (MDOT).

PTD Offers Several Training Sessions for FY 2005

The Passenger Transportation Division (PTD) and the Michigan Transit Training Network are pleased to provide several training sessions in FY 2005. All of these sessions are offered on a first-come first-served basis. Contacts are listed for each training if you need additional information.

System Security Awareness for Transit Employees, Oct. 19, Midland (Grace D. Dow Memorial Library).

This course is designed for front-line employees and supervisors who have direct contact with the public. The course covers skill sets for observing, determining, and reporting people and things that are suspicious or out-of-place. It encourages employees to use common sense when faced with various circumstances so operations can run safely, smoothly and efficiently. A focus is also placed upon an employee's initial priorities at the scene of a threat or incident. Check-in begins at 8:00 a.m.; the six-hour training begins at 8:30 a.m. Registration deadline is Oct. 5. A registration form may be downloaded in a fillable format by using the following link: www.mdot.state.mi.us/ptd/files/safety.pdf or contact Matthew Blackledge at 517/335-2538, e-mail blackledge2@michigan.gov.

Professional Dispatching and Scheduling (PDS), Nov. 4-5 (Otsego County Bus System) and Dec. 13-14 (Livingston Essential Transportation). The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) will present two PDS workshops in Michigan during FY 2005. This program focuses on operational efficiency and customer service techniques. Participants will develop and demonstrate their expertise in maximizing the efficient delivery of demand-response transportation, conveying riders' requests into affordable and appropriate trips, and in making effective use of their system's transportation resources. Registration information will be mailed in late September. For additional information on this training, contact Jill Adams at 517/373-2051 or e-mail adamsji@michigan.gov.

Vehicle Maintenance Management and Inspection (VMMI), Dec. 8-10 (Otsego County Bus System) and March 23-25 (Flint Mass Transportation Authority). CTAA will present two VMMI workshops in Michigan during FY 2005. This training and certification program is designed specifically for managers and technicians who

operate/maintain rural and complementary vans, cutaway paratransit and buses under 30 ft. in length. Registration information will be mailed in September. For additional information on this training, contact Jill Adams at 517/373-2051 or e-mail adamsji@michigan.gov.

Two Mail Lists Established to Enhance Communication

The Passenger Transportation Division recently established two e-communication mail lists (ListServ) to help Michigan transit agencies share information. One mail list is for the sharing of information on vehicle and equipment maintenance issues, and the other allows transit agencies to get input from other agencies on training questions or topics.

To use either mail list, you must first subscribe to it. Go to www.state.mi.us/listserv and click on "Subscribe by the Web." Enter your name, e-mail address and select either of these mail lists from the drop down menu: MDOT-MI-TVN (for maintenance issues) or MDOT-MI-TRANSIT-TRAINING-NETWORK (for training issues). When you have entered your name, e-mail address and selected the desired mail list, click on "Submit Request." Just repeat this process to subscribe to another list.

Once you have submitted your request and it is processed, you will receive a confirmation e-mail back saying you have been added to the list. The confirmation will tell you how to send e-mails via the ListServ. Please keep in mind that when someone sends an e-mail using the ListServ, all subscribers to that particular ListServ will automatically get the message. You may choose to respond to the message or not.

If you have any questions about these new e-communication tools, contact Al Johnson (517-335-2549, e-mail: johnsonal@michigan.gov) regarding the maintenance ListServ, or Jill Adams (517/373-2051, e-mail: adamsji@michigan.gov) regarding the training ListServ.

(Training News continues on page 12)

Dates to Remember

Training Conference for Front Line Transit Employees
Sept. 24-26, 2004: Bay City, MI
MASSTRANS, Vance Edwards 231/775-9411

International Truck and Bus Meeting and Exhibition
Sept. 27-29, 2004: Chattanooga, TN
Society of Automotive Engineers 877/606-7323

International Bus Roadeo
Oct. 7-10, 2004: Atlanta, GA
American Public Transportation Association (APTA)
202/496-4853

APTA Annual Meeting
Oct. 10-13, 2004: Atlanta, GA
202/496-4803

System Security Awareness for Transit Employees
Oct. 19, 2004: Midland, MI
Matt Blackledge 517/335-2538

Michigan Transit Conference
Oct. 25-27, 2004: Frankenmuth, MI
Bonnie Jay 517/373-7645

Professional Dispatching & Scheduling
Nov. 4-5, 2004: Gaylord, MI
Dec. 13-14, 2004: Howell, MI
Jill Adams 517/373-2051

PTD Training/Education Advisory Team Meeting
Nov. 9, 2004: Lansing, MI
Jill Adams 517/373-2051

PTD Specialized Services Coordination Team Meeting
Nov. 19, 2004: Lansing, MI
Stu Lindsay 517/335-2598

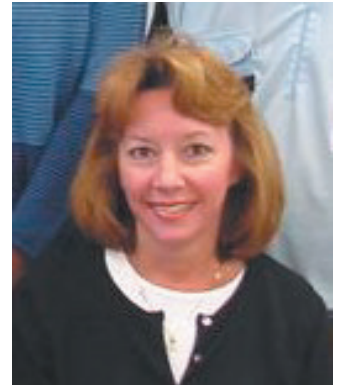
Vehicle Maintenance Management & Inspection
Dec. 8-10, 2004: Gaylord, MI
March 23-25, 2005: Flint, MI
Jill Adams 517/373-2051

Transit Community Loses a Friend

The Passenger Transportation Division is saddened by the loss of our friend and co-worker Lisa Funk, 46, who died of cancer on July 3, 2004. Lisa worked for MDOT for over 24 years.

Since October 2002, Lisa supervised PTD's Program Development Unit which is responsible for administering federal and state capital and operating programs and conducting core functions for PTD's financial involvement with transit agencies. Key among her responsibilities was leadership of the Michigan Transit Conference.

Many of you know Lisa because of her work prior to October 2002 when she supervised PTD's Statewide Coordination Unit. While in this position, Lisa chaired the Specialized Services Coordination Advisory Team. She also worked within MDOT to create guidelines for the Regional Transportation Program and provided coordination for MDOT's role in welfare reform, including crafting the Job Access/Reverse Commute application and Project Zero guidelines. PTD's administration of the MichiVan, Commuter Choice and Guaranteed Ride Home programs was initiated under Lisa's guidance.



Lisa was a valuable MDOT employee and a respected friend. She will be greatly missed. She is survived by her husband Steve and their two children, daughter Kelly and son Jason. Donations may be made to: Lisa A. Funk Memorial Fund, Johnnie Johnson (Trust Secretary), Fifth Third Bank, MD RLAN 1B, 2501 Coolidge Road, East Lansing, Michigan 48823 (make checks to Lisa A. Funk Memorial Fund); or Ele's Place, 1145 West Oakland Ave., Lansing, Michigan 48915 (make checks payable to Ele's Place and note in the mailing that it is in memory of Lisa Funk).

MARQ-TRAN Driver “Goes the Extra Mile”

Article contributed by Howard Schweppe, MARQ-TRAN

In late July, Marquette County Transit Authority (MARQ-TRAN) driver Bill Arbelius was doing door-to-door pick-ups in the City of Ishpeming. A regular rider of MARQ-TRAN’s door-to-door service, Arlene Young, had booked a ride. Arlene lives in Ishpeming’s Hi-Rise Apartments for senior citizens, but this time the pickup address was at her daughter’s house in Ishpeming, where Mrs. Young was “dog sitting” and “house sitting” for her vacationing daughter.

When Bill arrived at the appointed time, he noted that Mrs. Young was not waiting on the porch for her pick-up. She had always been timely in the past. He waited five minutes, then honked the horn a few times. When no one came out, Bill became concerned.

Bill knocked on the front door and rang the doorbell. He saw lights on in the house and heard dogs barking; however, no one came to the door. Bill also noted that yesterday’s newspaper had been left out on the front porch. Concerned for Mrs. Young’s welfare, Bill immediately contacted the MARQ-TRAN dispatcher, Joy Gustafson, by radio.

Based on his observation and past experience as Chief of Police in Richmond Township, Bill asked Joy to contact Central Dispatch and request them to send a police officer and ambulance. Joy accomplished this in record time.

Meanwhile, Bill noticed that an upstairs window was open and borrowed a ladder from a neighbor. Then Michigan State Police Trooper Andy Ringling arrived. Using the ladder, Ringling entered the upstairs bedroom and found Mrs. Young semiconscious on the floor. Ishpeming EMS personnel took Mrs. Young to Bell Memorial Hospital, where she was treated and, after several days convalescence, was released. Mrs. Young had fallen the evening prior and could not get up. Her daughter was not due back home for several days.

Bill’s quick thinking and care and concern for the passengers he serves is unmatched. Joy Gustafson’s timely relay of the facts and circumstances caused central dispatch to take immediate lifesaving action. For their efforts, the two MARQ-TRAN employees received commendations from their supervisors and from MARQ-TRAN’s Board of Directors and many thanks from Mrs. Young.

We at MARQ-TRAN are very proud to work here because of fellow employees like Bill and Joy. Their attitude is, “This wasn’t anything extra. It’s all part of the job.”

SMART Honors Five Area Businesses

The Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) recently presented Champions of Transit Awards to five local companies that support their employees by encouraging them to use public transit. SMART general manager Dan Dirks and board chairman Matthew Wirgau honored the Best Western Sterling Inn; Compuware; Henry Ford Village; Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn; and American Handicapped and Disadvantaged Workers for their participation in programs such as Get a Job, Get a Ride and TransitChek.

SMART’s Get a Job, Get a Ride program allows eligible new employees to obtain a free SMARTCard to ride SMART fixed routes service for up to a month. TransitChek is a transportation voucher program to allow businesses to easily subsidize their employees’ commute to work utilizing public transit.

Training News *(continued from page 10)*

MTC Travels to Frankenmuth

The Michigan Transit Conference (MTC) travels to the Bavarian Inn Lodge in Frankenmuth this year. The conference begins Monday afternoon, October 25 with optional break-out sessions and dinner at the hotel. The conference will officially begin on Tuesday, October 26 and end at noon on Wednesday, October 27.

This year’s conference features a vendor show, various break-out topics, and an address by MDOT Director Gloria Jeff. Registration packets were mailed in mid-August. If you have questions about the MTC, please contact Bonnie Jay, Conference Team Leader, at 517/373-7645, e-mail jayb@michigan.gov.

Head Start Transportation Act Requires Child Restraints

There has been some confusion over revisions to Part 1310 of the Head Start Transportation Act regarding child restraint system requirements. Although these requirements are the responsibility of the local Head Start agency, it is important for transit agencies providing Head Start service under contract to understand them.

Subsection 1310.11 requires that vehicles already being used to transport Head Start students be equipped with child restraint systems (CRS) by Jan. 20, 2004. Local Head Start agencies can request a waiver/extension to extend that date to Jan. 18, 2006. Subsection 1310.12 requires that new vehicles purchased after Jan. 18, 2006 which will be used for the transportation of Head Start students must be “equipped for use of height- and weight- appropriate child restraint systems and have reverse beepers.”

We have been informed of one CRS that does not require a bus seat to be retrofitted with seatbelts. Information on that system can be found at www.safeguardseat.com/star. We have not studied this CRS and cannot make any recommendations as to its effectiveness or safety at this time. We will share information on other systems as we find them and ask you to do the same. Please work with your local Head Start agency to ensure you are in compliance with their requirements.

US-12 Will Be Designated as Historic Heritage Route

The MDOT designated 209 miles of US-12 from New Buffalo to Detroit as a Historic Heritage Route. A Historic Heritage Route is described as a state highway having outstanding historic buildings and resources along its length.

US-12 is among the oldest road corridors east of the Mississippi River and originated as a network of centuries-old trails created by Native Americans. It has had many names in its history including Sauk Trail, Chicago Road, and Michigan Avenue. US-12 traverses the counties of Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, Branch, Hillsdale, Lenawee, Washtenaw and Wayne.

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